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Nixon: Declare war on terrorism

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Former President Richard M. Nixon called yesterday for "an international declaration of war" on terrorism and said "all civilized countries" should be persuaded to join economic sanctions and "appropriate military actions" against nations sponsoring terrorist activities.

Political issues driving state-sponsored terrorism in regions such as Central America and the Middle East "should be the top item on the agenda" of any summit meeting between President Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev, Mr. Nixon said.

These concerns should be linked firmly with future arms-control and trade agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union, he said.

"It is time for us to recognize that, when we have terrorist activities, they are not directed against one country but against all," Mr. Nixon told a group of senior editors and reporters at The Washington Times.

Mr. Nixon, in a rare interview in which he held many of his remarks off the record, said "non-terrorist countries should band together" against terrorism and should cooperate in establishing a "common intelligence bank" of information on terrorist groups and their activities.

Mr. Nixon limited his public comments to countering terrorism generally and to his views on making terrorist sponsorship a subject for discussion at a Reagan-Gorbachev summit. He did so because he was concerned about possible interference with U.S. efforts to free Americans seized 13 days ago

aboard a TWA airliner by Shi'ite terrorists and being held in Beirut.

"It is time to tell our allies to put up or shut up on all fronts — on intelligence, participating in economic sanctions and supporting military actions," the former president asserted. He suggested that there also should be "a moratorium on talk" when terrorist situations occur.

"A president should warn only once," Mr. Nixon said. "Strong words not followed by strong actions give the wrong signal to terrorists and are not going to lead to deterrence. It would be better to let our silence speak and let [the terrorists] guess what is going to happen."

Mr. Reagan also should ask Congress for "a very substantial increase" in funds and legal authority to reverse "the unfortunate cur-

tail of our covert intelligence capability" brought about during the Vietnam war under the leadership of the late Sen. Frank Church, a Democratic senator from Idaho.

Present U.S. intelligence efforts are not adequate to meet the challenge of international terrorism, he said, because Central Intelligence Agency Director William Casey "inherited a situation he has very little control of." U.S. intelligence agencies are impeded unnecessarily because they must clear their activities with "16 different congressional committees," the president said, exaggerating for emphasis.

Mr. Nixon cited Libya, Iran and Syria as potential targets of economic sanctions for their sponsorship of terrorist operations, although he acknowledged that "some of our European friends don't look at the Middle East situation the same way we do" because of their heavy dependence on oil from the region.

The home station of the Delta Force, a U.S. military force highly

trained in counter-terrorist operations, should be made more accessible to areas of possible crises by shifting it from the United States to Europe or the Mideast, he said, "because that's where the action is."

Noting that it required three years of preparation for his own 1973 summit with the late Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, Mr. Nixon said a comprehensive, workable arms control agreement between the U.S. and the Soviet Union cannot be prepared in time for a Reagan-Gorbachev summit.

"If you have something that's all froth and no beer, it's pretty poor-tasting stuff," he said.

However, he continued, a summit conference could make significant progress in dealing "with the political issues that lead to the use of arms" if trade, arms control and a positive Soviet response to suppressing terrorism are "linked to political conduct" by the U.S.S.R.

"I wouldn't give it for free," Mr. Nixon said. "Everything we do should have a price."